Defender of Detroit

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Defender of Detroit

by WeirdScribe95

Summary

He doesn't know where he came from. All he knows is that he doesn't belong on Earth... That he came from somewhere else. All he knows of his past is his name:

Optimus.

For seventy years, all Optimus has known is life on Earth. After a rocky start, the sentient transforming robot became the hero, helper, and protector of Detroit... and an honorary member of the Patel-Suzuki family.

He never thought he'd learn anything about his past... until a strange ship crash lands outside Detroit.

Notes

What if Optimus was the one thought dead on that fateful unauthorized trip?

And what if he was the first Autobot to come to Earth?

See the end of the work for more notes

Gone Horribly Wrong

"I've got a good feeling about this." Sentinel encouraged. "Any cycle now, we're going to be overflowing with rich, AllSpark-infused, Energon-y goodness!"

"Did you really just say 'Energon-y goodness'?" Elita-One deadpanned, giving him a look.

Optimus was in the lead. He didn't like this, any of it.

He'd been opposed to Sentinel's idea from the moment they heard the rumor about the ancient shipwreck. The blue, large-chinned Autobot had insisted that they'd be rich from all the Energon the ship likely held, not to mention the fact that cadets never got noticed unless they did something big. Elita-One hadn't been as interested in the potential riches as she was in the historical value of such a find. Optimus had reminded both of them of how much trouble they'd be in if they got caught: expelled from the Academy, tossed in the stockade, exiled like the Decepticons...

They'd heard all of his warnings... then disregarded them and practically forced him to come along.

He had to admit that he was interested in seeing an organic planet up close. He'd never seen an organic before, though the upperclassmen at the Academy liked to scare them from time to time about horrific creatures they'd encountered. Some of the cadets believed them, but Optimus wanted to reserve his judgment until he met an organic himself.

His thoughts were interrupted by a strange, chittering noise.

The attack came from seemingly no where. The cadets were taken by surprise and unprepared for the strange organic substance the alien shot at them. The lights on their shoulder struts illuminated the horrific, eight-legged monster before them.

Terrified as they were, their time in the Academy hadn't been wasted. Using Optimus' ax, Sentinel's shields, and Elita-One's copying power, the three of them managed to fight their way through the monsters.

Luckily, they managed to stick together and leave the horrors behind.

Unluckily, they still had no idea how to get out of the cavern.

"I'm beginning to see why organic planets are off-limits." Elita-One commented as they paused for a brief rest.

"Hey, look!"

Sentinel pointed behind Optimus.

He turned, and saw what they'd come to see.

Years underground with those monsters had done a lot of damage. However, it was still clearly a warship. A Decepticon warship. From within came the unmistakable glow of Energon cubes.

"We found it!" Sentinel cheered and transformed, driving down to the wreck at top speed.

"Come on!" Elita-One grinned before transforming and racing after the blue bot.

"Sentinel, Elita, wait!" Optimus warned, eyeing the cave roof above.

Their fight earlier had clearly had ramifications on the rest of the cave system. Large, ominous cracks had begun to appear...

Before he could warn them again, the chittering noise returned.

Even though they were better prepared for the creatures this time, they were hopelessly outmatched. Wave after wave of the creatures came. Even Sentinel had to admit that their best option was to retreat... but there was no where to run to.

Finally, a stray shot caused an Energon cube to explode. It dissolved a wall of the ship and revealed the entrance to more cave tunnels.

"Come on, now's our chance!" Sentinel yelled.

Elita-One ran towards him. Optimus would have done the same, but a giant monster dove in front of him.

"Optimus!" She yelled.

"Go, I'll follow you!" He shouted back. "Don't wait for me!"

The two locked optics for a moment before Sentinel pulled her away. They transformed, and were out of sight in microseconds.

"It's just you and me." Optimus growled at the beast before he buried his ax in its head.

Despite the three cadets having killed several of the aliens, more kept coming.

As he readied his ax to strike again, Optimus racked his processor for everything he'd ever learned about Decepticon warships.

"Come on," he told himself, "every single warship, no matter the period of war, always had..."

He sliced apart another creature and remembered.

Every Decepticon ship was always equipped with escape pods!

Maybe he could pilot one out of the caves and onto the surface.

It was a slim chance, but the best one he had.

He squirted foam into the eight optics of a beast before transforming and driving at top speed down one of the wreck's corridors.

"Come on, come on..." He muttered. "Yes!"

Most of the escape pods had been jettisoned, but there was one left!

Thanking Primus, Optimus transformed back into robot mode and dove head gasket first into the pod.

He shut the door just as a creature tried to follow him in.

"I hope I remember how to do this..." He muttered as he read over the controls on the pod.

Suddenly an explosion came from somewhere else on the wreck. The falling rocks must have set off the unstable Energon.

"Okay, no time to worry!" He decided as he powered up the escape pod.

While the controls were different from what he'd learned, he was still able to fly it with relative ease. He flew out of the wreck and into the cave system.

There was a hole in the cave's ceiling! He could see the light of the planet's orange sky...

A massive explosion rippled through the cave system, moving faster than any bot could have predicted.

Optimus' pod had just flown through the hole when the power of the explosion sent the craft careening out of control and into space.

As he was flung about the cabin of the pod, his helm collided with the back of the craft, leaving a dent.

He struggled to stay alert, but he lost the fight and fell unconscious.

His servo fell onto a button.

Activating light speed mode.

The explosion was so loud that the noise of a pod taking off for deep space was completely drowned out.

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"We have to go back for Optimus!" Elita-One panicked, trying to dive back into the caves.

Sentinel caught her just as another explosion knocked them off balance.

Worry in his optics, he pulled up a holographic scanner.

"I... I can't pick up his energy signature." He said in shock. Horror and guilt filled his optics.

They stared at the smoking crater with equal expressions of disbelief.

"No..." Elita whispered.

"He..." Sentinel managed to get out. "He's offline."

They were silent before Elita tackled Sentinel, pummeling him with her fists as cries of rage and grief poured out of her.

"YOU DID THIS! YOU SAID WE SHOULD COME! YOU TALKED HIM INTO IT! YOU LEFT HIM! YOU KILLED HIM! I HATE YOU!"

Hate-filled words escaped as she continued to pummel Sentinel. Finally, he caught her arms. Unable to fight anymore, she was forced to glare at him.

Her punches, while powerful, had mostly missed, leaving Sentinel with a mostly unblemished face. Said face was twisted in guilt.

"This was all my fault." He muttered, his voice choked. "He... He was my friend, too."

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As was protocol, when an escape pod entered light speed with no previously selected destination, the pod's autopilot chose where to go. Due to being designed by Decipticons, it looked for a planet with no Autobot presence.

While a bit of a flight, it found a perfect world: a little blue organic planet.

Optimus was slowly waking up as the pod began to make its way towards the rock.

He realized with a shudder of pain how much damage he'd suffered during the fight.

Images appeared on his view screen.

Engaging energy transference to self-healing nanites. This will diverge power from awareness mechanisms, including audials, visuals, mobility, and consciousness. Warning: this procedure may result in memory loss. Any memories that have not been saved to personal drive will be purged.

With a jolt, Optimus realized that he'd never done that. He'd never been hurt enough for his body to undergo a hard reset.

Was he going to lose all of his memories?

Not knowing how much time he had left, Optimus selected his favorite memory and began to save it to his drive.

It was of himself, Elita-One, and Sentinel on their first night at the Academy. They'd climbed on the roof of the barracks to see the stars, warm cups of Energon in their servos.

"Killer view, huh Optimus?" Elita had asked, using his newly-received name.

"Amazing." He'd agreed.

That was the only memory he was able to save... and it was incomplete. It cut off before the mech saw his friend's face: all it showed was looking at a sky of stars while hearing the name "Optimus".

Before he could leave a note, or any reminder of who he was, the hard reset began.

Optimus fell into the Cybertronian equivalent of a very deep sleep.

And the pod continued on it's mission, eventually crashing into the woods behind a stone house and large barn.

It's Nice to Have a Friend

Chapter Summary

Optimus awakens somewhere unlike any place he's ever seen.

Chapter Notes

According to the showrunners, most of Transformers Animated takes place in 22nd century Detroit. For the sake of having a somewhat set timeline, Optimus landed on Earth in the year 2037. The key events of this fic will happen in the year 2107.

The title of this chapter comes from the Taylor Swift song of the same name. I was listening to it while I wrote this chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Naanee had said the huge rumbling noise was just distant thunder. That might have fooled Sanjay and her mother, but Shikhi wasn't so easily convinced.

She'd studied thunderstorms to help her little brother get over his fear of them, and she knew that thunder didn't sound like that.

Knowing that Naanee would never let her out into the woods so late at night (even if summer vacation had just begun), Shikhi did the most logical thing: she stuffed as much gear as she could into her backpack, waited until everyone was asleep, then darted out the window and into the woods.

If her grandmother, mother, and father had known how often Shikhi sneaked out through her window, they never would have let her have the first floor bedroom.

Adjusting her glasses and pulling her thick, curly black hair into a ponytail, Shikhi set off into the woods.

It wasn't too hard to find what had made the crash. The furrows left behind were six feet deep, and went for at least forty feet.

Wide-eyed, the eleven-year-old girl followed the tracks until she found what had made them.

It was mostly spherical, and made entirely out of metal. And it was *huge,* the size of the barn at least.

Shikhi had seen enough science fiction movies to know that she was looking at a space ship.

She felt a pang of unease, and wondered if she should go inside... before she realized that was a stupid question.

Of *course* she was going inside the space ship!

With the help of the flashlight she'd brought along, she was able to see what looked like a port hole high up. While far too high for her to get to on her own, several trees were growing near where the ship stopped. Most of the trees had been toppled, but a few were still standing. One was growing right next to the ship, with its branches spreading out to the door.

Wasting no time, the spirited young girl began to climb. It wasn't the easiest climb (as she was wearing a thick jacket against the chill and couldn't see where she was going) but she made it to the porthole. Before her courage could give out, she leapt into the ship.

She took a moment to look around. Calling it a ship would have been generous; it was one big room with a few computers, a chair, an out-cold giant robot...

Wait, what?

"No way." Shikhi muttered to herself.

In her head, logic and excitement battled. On one hand, going up to a giant alien robot was a terrible idea. On the other hand, *there was a giant alien robot right in front of her!*

However, she knew that if she was gone too long, Naanee would come to check on her, see she wasn't in bed, and get worried. And Shikhi didn't know anyone who could stand through Naanee's lectures without crying.

"I'll be back tomorrow." She whispered at the sleeping (was it sleeping?) robot before she began to climb down the tree.

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Internal repairs successful. Body at 50% health and efficiency. Restoring non-essential mechanisms. No threats in immediate area. Local language has been assimilated from information source known as 'World Wide Web'. Beginning waking sequence.

The blue robot opened his optics.

He was in... some kind of ship. An... escape pod. Yes, that was right.

But... why was he in an escape pod?

Where had he escaped from, and why?

Was there a disaster?

And...

His optics widened.

"What's my name?" He said out loud, momentarily startling him.

Desperate for any clues that would help him sort out this confusing mess, the mech searched his memory.

He could find only one:

He was sitting on a roof. He was looking up at the stars. Someone called to him.

"Optimus." He said out loud. "My name is Optimus."

Happy that he had at least one idea of who he was, Optimus tried to stand up.

And let out a grunt of pain.

A message appeared on his optics.

External repairs via self-healing nanites in progress. Estimated time to completion: 36 megacycles.

He at least knew what a megacycle was, but the message gave him even more questions.

First of all, how had he gotten so badly injured?

And what was he supposed to do if he couldn't move for a day and a half?

There was a small noise. He turned to see a... something coming through a whole in the pod's main viewer.

It seemed sentient, whatever it was. They had brown skin, long curly black hair tied back with some sort of yellow elastic device. They were wearing a gold-colored garment over the upper part of their body, a darker colored garment on their legs, a strange device over their optics, a green pouch on their back, and orange objects on their feet.

The second they saw Optimus, the two locked optics.

The mech... didn't know what to think. To his knowledge, he'd never met a sentient organic... or any organic. Was this small creature dangerous? It didn't seem to be, but what if it spit acid or something?

His worries began to disappear when the creature smiled.

"Oh, you're awake! I came by last night and you were... Um, hi!"

The creature's voice made them sound like a femme, albeit a young one. She made an odd jerking motion with her servo.

Her optics went wide and she took a step back.

"Um, you're not going to hurt me or eat me or anything, right?"

"No." He responded, completely unsure of what to do in this situation. Despite his lack of memories, though, he knew he didn't want to harm the creature.

"Oh, that's good." She relaxed before her optics went even wider. "Oh my... You can speak my language! This is so cool!"

"...I don't think the temperature has anything to do with this." He replied, feeling confused.

"Oh, sorry. Around here, the word 'cool' can also be used to describe something positive." She explained.

"Oh." Optimus nodded a bit (at least he could move his neck without pain).

Realizing that he had someone who could answer at least some of his questions, he continued to speak.

"Where am I?"

"You're in Michigan." She answered.

The expression on his face plate betrayed his confusion, and she elaborated.

"You're on a planet called Earth. We're currently on the continent of North America, in a country called the United States. We're in the state of Michigan, in a forest a few miles away from a city called Detroit."

"Earth." He muttered. "Do... Do you know where I came from?"

"No, sorry." She answered, her smile disappearing.

"...Do you know what I am?"

"...Do you remember anything?"

"No." He looked down. "I think my ship crashed here, and I was injured in the impact. My memories must have been lost."

"I'm so sorry." She responded, her optics full of sadness.

As he watched, she walked across the dashboard of the ship until she was level with his shoulder strut. With a short jump, she leapt onto his shoulder.

Worried about what she was about to do, Optimus eyed her anxiously.

That anxiety was replaced with confusion when she walked over to his face plate and leaned against it, spreading her arms.

"What are you doing?" He asked.

"Hugging you."

"Oh... thank you." He replied.

Well, one question was answered. This organic certainly wasn't dangerous... She was actually very kind.

She let him out of the hug and looked him in the optic.

"Do you remember your name?"

"My name is Optimus."

"Whoa, cool name. Better than mine, anyway."

"What's your name... and forgive me, but what are you?"

"Oh! I'm a human being. Humans are the only sentient species on this planet. I'm eleven years old, and my name is Shikhi Banerjee."

"Shikhi?"

"Yeah, it's a Hindu name. It can mean either 'flames' or 'peacock'."

"What is Hindu? And what's a peacock?"

"Hinduism is my Naanee's religion, although my parents and I don't follow it as much as she does. And a peacock is a bird."

"...What's a Naanee? Also, what's a bird?"

"Wow... You don't know anything about Earth."

"I don't even know where I came from." He lamented.

She looked at him from behind her ocular device before brightening.

"Oh, I know! I need to run home and grab a few things, but I'll be back!"

She started to walk back towards the dashboard.

"Wait..."

He didn't want to force her to stay, but he couldn't move without groaning in pain and he was in an unfamiliar place. He felt... vulnerable.

She turned and seemed to read the expression on his face plate.

"I'll be back, I promise."

She snapped her fingers (a gesture that confused Optimus) and took the elastic item out of her hair.

"See this?" She held the yellow object up. "This is called a scrunchie. Some humans like to wear them in their hair. And this is my absolute favorite scrunchie."

She crouched down and left the yellow object on his shoulder strut.

"I'll leave this here so you know I'll be back. Okay?"

"...Alright."

She brightened and left the ship.

True to her word, she was back shortly after. She'd filled her "backpack" with items called books, along with things that humans consumed ("Naanee wouldn't let me spend a day in the woods without packing a lunch.")

She spent the afternoon sitting on his shoulder strut, occasionally eating the objects she brought while reading to him from the books. Through her, he learned more and more about this strange new world.

"...and that's how plants make their own food."

"Amazing." He said, intrigued. "Um... What do robots here eat?"

He hadn't wanted to say anything, but his power cells were beginning to get low. He didn't know what usually consumed for power, but he knew that he'd need to find it or an alternative soon.

"I thought you might say that, so I brought this."

She moved aside her "lunchbox" and reached into her backpack. Inside was a canister of something with the label "Banerjee Biofuel".

"My dad is a biochemist. That means he specializes in a form of science called chemistry. He invented a type of fuel that that's renewable, completely non-toxic, and compatible with pretty much any machine. It's how my family made all of their money. Here, let's see if you can eat it."

She opened the canister and asked him to open his mouth. Uncertain, he complied, and she poured a tiny amount into his mouth.

It tasted... unusual, but not bad. He swallowed the experimental drop, and saw (to his surprise) that his fuel levels went up a percentage.

"I can eat this." He told her.

Grinning, she poured the rest into his mouth. It wasn't much (to him it was barely three sips), but simply knowing that he had a means of refueling left him feeling much better.

"I'll bring you more tomorrow." She promised. "Maybe I can bring my dad to meet you; if he knows about you, then he'll be able to bring you as many barrels as you need."

As time went on, the sun started to set. Shikhi began to sadden.

"I'm sorry, Optimus, but I have to go. Naanee and my parents will get worried if I'm gone too long... and Sanjay will tease me if I get grounded again..."

"It's alright." He reassured her. "I should probably recharge anyway."

"Okay." She took her scrunchie out again and laid it on his shoulder strut. "I'll be back in the morning."

"You don't need to leave that." He told her.

They locked eyes, and she gave a smile.

"Okay." She put the elastic item back in her hair, grabbed her things, and began to leave.

"See you later."

"Good night." He responded.

He thought back on the day as he began to fall into recharge.

He still didn't know what he was, or how he'd gotten here.

But... At least he had a friend.

Chapter End Notes

While I can understand why some of you might think there's a connection between Shikhi and the Sumdacs, I promise there isn't. I spent a long time finding names for my human characters, and I thought that the names Shikhi, Priyanka, and Amaya sounded really cool (keep an eye out for the latter two, they'll appear later).

According to Transformers Animated canon, Animated!Optimus is twenty-two feet tall (nearly half the size he is in most continuities). Thus, he's able to fit inside some buildings (like the Banerjee's barn) without too much trouble.

Optimus has never seen human clothes before, hence his description of Shikhi's outfit. In this chapter, she's wearing glasses, a gold-colored sweater, black leggings, a yellow scrunchie, a green backpack, and orange combat boots.

Shikhi Banerjee was a lot of fun to create. While she won't be the human companion Optimus spends most of the fic with, she does inspire a lot of his views on Earth and humans. By the way, she's right about what her name translates to: I looked it up. Shikhi (pronounced like the first part of Shakira) means both "peacock" and "flame". It's a cool name no matter what translation you prefer.

I wonder what's happening back on Cybertron...

At What Cost?

Chapter Summary

Sentinel and Elita-One are forced to face consequences.

Chapter Notes

The last chapter was about making friends. This chapter... is not.

Also, minor swearing.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Hey, Elita--"

"Don't talk to me." She growled as she kept loading her personals into her trunk, not turning around.

He winced. His own trunk was fully packed, ready to go.

The hearing had been a megacycle ago.

Sentinel's Spark was pulsing at a level that could not have possibly been safe. Terrible visions of their possible fates had flashed through his processor: centuries spent in the stockade, exiled, turned into empuratas...

There'd been little evidence, but what they had was certainly damning: the prosecutor had shown the jury the flight path of their ship along with the message they'd sent their superior saying they were going to a history museum on Iacon, and one of the upperclassmen had admitted to telling the three the story about the wrecked Decepticon ship.

He and Elita-One had both plead guilty; there was no point in pleading anything else.

When it was their turn to speak, they gave very similar stories. Sentinel emphasized that the entire misadventure had been his idea. He said that he'd convinced Elita to go along with it, and that Optimus only came along because he was trying to keep them out of trouble. Elita-One hadn't differed from his story, and had been glaring at him the whole time.

It was obvious to the jury, and Sentinel, who blamed who for the death of Optimus.

Ultra Magnus himself had overseen the entire tribunal. His face plate had shown absolutely nothing the entire time, giving off no emotion or strong opinions... something the blue Autobot had found disturbing. He'd wished he'd show anger at his two wayward students, sadness that one of his best pupils was gone, just something.

Unfortunately, when the time for sentencing came, Sentinel got his wish.

The jury, which was composed entirely of Autobot Academy professors and recent graduates, had found the two guilty. Not that anybot was shocked.

"Cadet Elita-One, stand for sentencing."

She'd risen.

"Due to your being a bystander in this, you will not be expelled from the Autobot Academy. However, your credits for the past semester will be canceled, and you will not move forward with your class. There will also be a formal mark on your record, barring you from ever entering the Elite Guard."

Her optics widened slightly, but she gave a brief nod.

"Cadet Sentinel, stand for sentencing."

When Sentinel stood and looked in Ultra Magnus' face, all he saw was disappointment.

"It is clear that you were the instigator in this tragedy. I'd had high hopes for you, I even saw a potential leader in you. Clearly I was mistaken. You are hereby expelled from the Autobot Academy. With your completed credits, you are eligible for the rank of Minor, but you will not ever be promoted from this rank. I'm assigning you to be the assistant leader of a boot camp. May your new charges show less arrogance and disregard for life than you."

He finished his speech and stood, his hammer in his servo. He looked across the courtroom.

"This court is now adjourned."

Their dreams had both been crushed in five cycles. The three of them had always dreamed of joining the Elite Guard, becoming like the Primes of legend.

But that could never happen.

And it was all his fault.

But surely Elita had it in her Spark to forgive him, right?

She loaded the last of her items into her trunk. Due to her demotion, she was being forced to move to a different barracks. Due to the entire Academy knowing what had happened, they all knew she wouldn't be welcomed by her new teammates with open servos.

Sentinel himself would be moving out in a megacycle; with his new rank of Minor, he was being sent to begin his new assignment.

"Look..." He started.

She paused, still not facing him.

"I know I messed up. Primus knows that was the dumbest thing I ever did, and I know apologizing won't fix it. But, I don't want to lose another friend. For what it's worth, I really am sor--"

"Just shut up." She growled.

He froze.

She turned around, fury and grief in her optics.

"I loved Optimus with all of my Spark." She said, pain in her voice. "He and I talked about becoming Conjunxes someday."

His optics widened. He'd known that she and Optimus were close, but he hadn't known...

"We wanted to make it to the Elite Guard first." She spat. "He knew how much the Guard meant to me, and he didn't want me to give up one dream for the other. And now--"

A sob slipped out, and she choked on her words before speaking.

"And now I've lost both."

She looked up again, her eyes full of nothing but anger and hatred.

"So don't apologize. I don't want to hear it. In fact, I don't want to hear anything from you again."

With that, she grabbed her trunk and began to stomp out.

"W-Wait! Please!" Sentinel all but ran after her.

He'd lost so much. Optimus, his chance at the Elite Guard, his personal apprenticeship with Ultra Magnus, his chances at becoming Magnus... He couldn't lose anything else.

He grabbed her by the arm, thinking it would stop her.

"I don't want to lose another friend."

She grabbed his arm, copied his power, and then used a shield to force him off of her.

"Don't touch me, Sentinel." She growled. "Don't look at me, don't talk to me, don't com me, and don't *ever* call me your friend again."

"Elita, please!" He begged.

She grabbed her trunk and walked out of the barracks.

She didn't look back once.

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A megacycle later, Sentinel Minor arrived at his new assignment: a boot camp at Tyger Pax.

He was to be the assistant sergeant to the camp's leader, Cliffjumper.

He was given numerous demeaning chores to complete before they got their newest batch of recruits, what Cliffjumper called a "test of his loyalty".

"Anybot who's desperate enough to see a Decepticon ship that he gets his best friend killed," he'd told Sentinel on his first day, "sounds pretty sketchy to me. You want me to think you aren't a traitor? Then make sure the floors of the barracks are spotless before the new recruits arrive tomorrow. Especially under Seaspray Prime's bunk, that mech *really* liked swimming..."

He'd swallowed what was left of his pride, and got to work.

At least if he was left alone to complete chores, then he could be alone with his grief.

Chapter End Notes

A lot of people thought it was confusing why in canon Optimus still received the rank of Prime, despite the incident on his record and Sentinel badmouthing him whenever he could. Personally, it's my headcanon that Ultra Magnus always suspected that both of them were responsible for what happened at Archa 7, and thus lightened Optimus' sentence. That said, he pushed Optimus whenever he could to try and get him to rise to the level he eventually did (as the hero of Cybertron).

Here, though, Ultra Magnus knows that Sentinel and Elita-One were both completely responsible, but their obvious guilt and shared blame got them lighter sentences... though he suspects that Sentinel had more to do with Optimus' "death" than either of them admitted. This will be shown more in the next part of the series.

For those of you who don't know, in Transformers lore one of the worst punishments a mech or femme could receive was becoming an empurata. An empurata is basically a slave whose face has been removed and replaced with a mask that has one bulbous red eye and no mouth, preventing them from speaking. They've also had their hands and feet

removed and replaced three claws on each stump. Even in universe it was considered extreme, unnecessarily cruel, and only the worst criminals received it.

Poor Cliffjumper's been getting the short end of the stick since Animated. First he was Sentinel's assistant, then he got killed in the first episode of Prime, then he got killed AGAIN in Bumblebee... Do the modern Transformers creators just hate Cliff? Well, I like him, so I decided to give the poor little guy a break.

Cinema and Starlight

Chapter Summary

A chapter showing the best summer of Shikhi's life.

Chapter Notes

This chapter is basically a bunch of drabbles combined. Part 1 of this series needs to cover seventy years before getting to the events of the series (which will be in Part 2). So expect the layout to be little... unorthodox.

This one is mainly to show the growing bond between Optimus and Shikhi's family.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Okay, watch your head as you come in!" Shikhi encouraged as she led her friend into the barn.

Sanjay, hugging his stuffed elephant, watched as Optimus ducked into the barn.

When he bought the house, Mister Banerjee had intended to turn the barn into a lab. Those plans had been abandoned when he got a high-tech chemistry lab at his company's headquarters. Now the family mainly used it to park cars, though Shikhi and Sanjay used it as a play room. It was one massive room with a loft serving as a second floor. Shikhi had put a table, a projector, and a collection of (Naanee-approved) movies up there so she could host movie nights for her friends.

To the eleven-year-old's shock, her family had taken meeting Optimus a lot better than she'd expected. True, she'd believed Sanjay would love the robot instantly (he was a little boy, after all), but she'd thought her parents would be more skeptical. But her father had been fascinated by him, and had been the one to invite him to live in the barn until further notice. Her mother had been far more reserved, but the fact that Optimus promised he'd never hurt anyone had helped her feel comfortable enough to second her husband's offer.

The real shock had been Naanee. Shikhi had almost no hope of her grandmother accepting Optimus, but the little old woman had been the one to *insist* Optimus stay with them.

"I may not have come from the stars," she'd told the robot when they first met, "but I, too, once came here from a far away land. I know what it is like to start over in a strange place."

The eleven-year-old was pulled from her thoughts by the sound of a middle-aged man wheeling in the last barrel on a dolley.

"Alright." Shikhi's father, Ryan, spoke as he finished setting up the barrels. "Optimus, if you drink about three barrels a day, then there should be enough here to last you three weeks. If you start running low, tell me or Shikhi."

"I understand, and I promise to try and make it last." Optimus responded. "Thank you again."

"Oh, it's no problem." Ryan waved him off. Then he grinned. "At least I finally found someone who enjoys my cooking."

"His food tastes like toe nails!" Sanjay said, pointing at his father.

"Oh... What are toe nails?" Optimus wondered.

"Don't worry about it." Shikhi told the giant robot.

"Alright, settle down now." Amita, Shikhi and Sanjay's mother, walked in. "It is time for some of us to be in bed."

"But, love, I'm not sleepy." Ryan protested.

"I meant a certain five-year-old." She rolled her eyes lovingly at her husband before she picked up her son.

She paused, looking uncertain, before she turned to Optimus. "Have a good night, Mister Optimus. If you need something, please let us know."

"I'll be fine, thank you Missus Banerjee."

She nodded before looking at Shikhi.

"Alright, you can watch two movies with Optimus. But nothing too scary or violent, and I want you coming in to bed the second you feel tired."

"Yes, Mom."

"And no soda."

"Yes, Mom."

"And not too much junk food. Popcorn is fine, but no sugar--"

"My love, she is fine!" Ryan reassured her. "Shikhi, you and Optimus have fun, yes?"

"Yes, Dad."

"Good girl. Goodnight to you both."

He led his wife and son out of the barn.

"Alright!" Shikhi climbed up the rope ladder to the barn's loft, went to the table and turned on the projector. A square of light appeared on the far wall.

"What is a 'movie' again?" Optimus asked.

"It's something humans like to watch for entertainment." Shikhi explained. "It's like watching a story happen right in front of you. But most of the time, it's all pretend."

"How do you know what movies are fake and which ones are real?"

"Movies that aren't pretend are full of facts. Movies that are focus more on the story than facts. Now where is... Here!"

She held up *E.T.* "This movie is great! It's about an alien who comes to Earth and becomes friends with a kid!"

The robot sat on the floor (the family cars had been moved to the drive way to accommodate him) and prepared to watch. He seemed skeptical, but brightened up a little when Shikhi (with a bag of popcorn in hand) asked to sit on his shoulder.

Two hours later, Optimus had the saddest eyes imaginable while Shikhi was practically sobbing.

"Your eyes," the alien robot noticed. "They're leaking."

"I'm okay." She told him. "Humans do this sometimes when they're sad."

"Alright." He sounded unsure. "Why don't you recharge for the night? We can watch more of these... movies tomorrow."

"Okay."

She had him help her turn off the projector, then she went to go inside the house.

She was barely ten feet from the barn's entrance when she heard the projector booting up.

Shikhi looked back to see Optimus watching the movie again, his eyes glued to the screen.

She stifled a laugh and went inside.

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"So," Optimus struggled to understand, "the purpose of swimming is to move through water so you don't drown and die?"

"Yep." Shikhi nodded from her place on his shoulder strut.

"But wouldn't the better strategy be to simply stay out of the water altogether?"

"Sure, we could." The girl nodded. "But on hotter days, it's a really good way to cool off. Heck, part of why we learn to swim is so we can play in the water. Though people who aren't confidant swimming yet can wear floaties, like Sanjay."

Sanjay beamed from where he sat on Optimus' other shoulder strut, wearing his dark green "swim suit". A pair of light green inflatable devices were on his arms.

After a bit of convincing (and hearing some warnings that the water might still be too cold), Shikhi and Sanjay had finally managed to convince their parents and Naanee to let them go to the "swimming hole" after Optimus promised to supervise them. Plus, the adults liked the fact that he'd be able to carry the children there, meaning they wouldn't have to walk through the forest.

He still couldn't get over the beauty of the "woods", as Shikhi called them. The trees were as tall as he was, and gave off a strange but not unpleasant smell. Because it was the "summer" (the hottest period of the year), there were many flowers and plants in bloom. Even more interesting were the animals: small creatures called birds, bugs, butterflies, and squirrels seemed to be everywhere.

Following Shikhi's directions (which were useful, given he kept getting distracted by the life all around him), they eventually made it to the "swimming hole".

He understood the meaning of the name the second he saw it. It was a large indentation in the ground that, due to a small waterfall, was filled with water.

"Yay, we're here!" Sanjay cheered. "Put us down, Opt-mus!"

He complied, lowering himself and setting both children gently on the ground.

Optimus then watched as the two humans whooped and jumped into the water. Due to their reactions, he could tell the water was colder than they'd thought it would be. But they didn't let that stop them, and swam for an entire megacycle. The robot contented himself with simply watching, impressed with how a land-based species was so capable in the water (even if Sanjay needed his "floaties").

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"Isn't it beautiful?" Shikhi asked.

"It is." Optimus agreed.

After the day at the swimming hole, the eleven-year-old had all but begged her new friend to take her to the meadow when it got dark.

The meadow, which was a mostly flat stretch of land with no trees or bushes, was the perfect spot for stargazing.

The space was wide enough that Optimus could easily lie down. He lay still, with Shikhi laying on his chassis.

"Mom told me once that these," she pointed up, "are just the stars that we can see. There are thousands, maybe millions more that we can't see because the light's too far away."

"It is amazing." The alien robot replied. "I... I wonder what star I came from."

"I wish I knew." She answered. "Maybe then we could find a way to get you there. Or at least help you find your family."

"I wouldn't recognize them if I saw them." He lamented. "My memory is completely gone."

They were silent for a moment.

"I know it's not much, and that we're not the same species," Shikhi started, "but you could make a home here. With my family."

Optimus paused.

"For someone so small," he replied, "you're very kind."

They fell into silence again, staring at the stars.

Chapter End Notes

A LOT of moments between Shikhi and Optimus were inspired by The Iron Giant and the scenes between Shadow and Maria in Sonic The Hedgehog 3.

Shikhi is a second-generation Indian immigrant. Her grandmother and late grandfather came to Michigan from India to try and start a new life. Naanee can be strict, but she's very empathetic.

How could I write a story about a kid and an alien becoming friends and NOT mention E.T.?

I was tempted to do a version of the "Bonsai!" scene from The Iron Giant, but I realized that even with amnesia, that would be a little OOC for Optimus.

In Memoriam

Chapter Summary

> Optimus may not have had a chance to leave his mark on Cybertron, but he will not be forgotten.

Chapter Notes

> If you like to cry while reading fics, I'd recommend reading this chapter while listening to Linkin Park's "One More Light".

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Despite the Academy training mechs and femmes to fight in battle, the death of a cadet was a rare and tragic occurrence.

Ultra Magnus, despite his duties as Cybertron's leader, personally asked to deliver the eulogy. It was the least he could do; he'd seen so much promise in Cadet Optimus.

While Sentinel had been the obvious choice for future Magnus, he'd always wondered if Optimus would have made a better leader...

But now he'd never know.

As was custom, all of Cadet Optimus' teachers were invited. The other cadets were told of the funeral, but they weren't required or expected to attend.

The Magnus was shocked when the entirety of the Academy's student body showed up.

Even Sentinel Minor and Elita-One were in attendance (although they stood at separate ends of the funerary hall and never spoke a word to one another).

He hid his shock well, and (as was custom) went to the podium to speak.

There was no body; Archa Seven had been searched but they'd found nothing. Not even spilled oil.

"When an Autobot is recruited to fight for their home," he began, "they are told of the dangers that come with being a soldier. They know that they are expected to put their lives on the line for Cybertron. Those who are willing to live and die for their home are deemed among the noblest of Cybertronians.

"When one is off-lined before they have the chance to serve, however, it is a loss not only of a life, but of a potential hero. From the day he entered the Academy, I always knew that there was something special in Cadet Optimus. He had the programming of a soldier, and the Spark of a hero. I expected greatness from him. He did not disappoint; every moment he was here, he dedicated time and energy not only to making sure he excelled in his training, but that others had a chance to excel.

"In his final moments, he showed how selfless he truly is by giving his life to make sure his friends could safely escape. If he had lived, I have no doubt he would have proven himself worthy of the title of Prime. He will be missed by all who knew him. May we take comfort in the fact that he is now safe in the Well of Sparks. Optimus, may your memory never fade. Till all are one."

"Till all are one." The funeral's attendees repeated.

"If anyone wishes to speak, please approach the podium." Ultra Magnus stepped away from the stage.

Numerous mechs and femmes tried to walk forward at once. The Magnus ended up having to stay up front to maintain some form of order.

Stories about Optimus filled the room. One femme, Chromia, mentioned how Optimus was the first mech to not criticize her desire to become a field commander. A mech named Warpath mentioned how Optimus helped him study so he wouldn't fail an exam. Jazz spoke fondly of a trip to Iacon the two had taken together. First Aid, a medibot in training, discussed how Optimus, if there was ever an accident during training, always made sure everyone else was okay, even if he'd been hurt himself.

Ultra Magnus was as impressed as he was saddened. The deceased cadet hadn't even finished out his time in the Academy, yet he was as known, respected, and beloved as any Prime.

It wasn't customary for the leader to stay for the entirety of the funeral, and the Magnus still had much to do and oversee.

However, before he left, he took one more look at the empty casket.

"'Til all are one." He gave a solemn nod before he left.

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Elita-One didn't speak to anyone during the funeral. Fortunately, due to everyone knowing about what happened at Archa Seven, no one was willing to talk to her. Or Sentinel for that matter.

She didn't care if anyone spoke to her. She wasn't there for them.

Before she started working to finish out her Academy training, there was something she needed to do.

She waited until all of the other mourners had gone. Sentinel had tried to remain with her, but Cliffjumper had forced him to return to the boot camp he'd been stationed at.

When she was finally alone, she went to the casket.

She placed both servos on the empty box (*"We had search and rescue teams led by two different Primes looking, but they found nothing."*).

There was so much they'd wanted to do together. Planets to visit, things to do, battles to fight... a family to forge...

She stopped herself before she lost control.

She needed to do this.

"I miss you, Optimus." She whispered. "You were right. If we'd listened... if I'd listened... maybe you would still be online."

The box, despite being empty, would be shot out into space, as was custom.

She sighed, and took out a beaker.

Inside was a blue, glowing substance. Energon.

Her innermost Energon.

"I love you, Optimus." She whispered. "And I swear, I'll never forget you."

She placed the beaker in the box.

Then she put on a brave face plate and all but stormed out of the funeral hall.

Chapter End Notes

Ultra Magnus still has a Spark, and I have a feeling he'd want to conduct a funeral for Optimus. Given his helpful and caring nature, I have a feeling that Optimus was well-liked during his time at the Academy.

Elita-One and Sentinel are basically outcasts among the other cadets. They won't even talk to each other (Sentinel wants to talk to Elita but she's having none of it).

It's so weird writing a funeral scene for someone you know isn't dead. There's so much dramatic irony here...

More Than Meets The Eye

Chapter Summary

> Optimus learns more about himself, defends/reveals himself to the city of Detroit, and loses his escape pod... all in the same day.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Shh," Shikhi whispered to Optimus, who was crouched behind the barn with her.

The robot had been told that Missus Banerjee was a former mechanic who was incredibly gifted with cars. She'd stopped working when her husband invented Banerjee Biofuel, but would still fix up her friends' vehicles if they asked. One of those friends was Detroit's fire chief.

"So, you have someone whose job it is to set things on fire?" Optimus asked.

"No, it's the opposite." She whispered back. "Firefighters are people trained to put out fires before they get out of control. The fire chief is their leader."

"And... What is that vehicle?"

The fire chief had brought along a large red, blue, and silver vehicle covered in odd devices.

"That's a fire truck. It's what fire fighters use to get to the sites of fires. It has all of their gear inside."

Instinctively, a scanner in Optimus' optics activated. Before he knew what he was doing, he had every single detail about the vehicle in his processor.

Luckily, neither the fire chief nor Amita had noticed anything.

He waited until after the chief had left before he told Shikhi what he'd done.

"Why did you scan the fire truck?" She asked, confused. "I didn't even know you had a scanner."

"Neither did I." He admitted. "And I don't know. I saw the vehicle, and I liked it... then I scanned it."

"But why would you have a scanner that tells you all about a vehicle in the first place. It's not like you can turn into it..."

Something inside him clicked.

What if he hadn't just liked the vehicle... What if he'd wanted to be like it?

To... transform?

Moving on instinct, he tucked his arms, legs, and head in. Wheels seemed to appear out of nowhere, and his internal sensors allowed him to see around him when his optics disappeared.

In seconds, a firetruck stood where Optimus had been.

"WHOA!" Shikhi yelled. "You just... You turned into a firetruck!"

"I'm as surprised as you!" Optimus responded, his voice coming from somewhere inside the truck.

"Can... Can you change back?" She asked tentatively.

Instead of speaking, the fire truck turned back into a twenty-two-foot-tall robot.

"I'd say the answer's yes." He replied.

"So. Cool." Shikhi was beaming from ear to ear. "And I love the sound you make when you transform!"

Her eyes went wide and she started running for the house.

"Come on, let's show the others!"

- - - -

Now that Optimus had a decent way to blend in, Naanee, Ryan, and Amita had given Shikhi permission to show him Detroit.

"Here's ten dollars in case you need a snack or run into any trouble." Ryan had given the eleven-year-old a green slip of paper. "Do not talk to any strangers, stay with Optimus the whole time, and come right home if you have a problem... or get scared."

"Thanks, Dad." She beamed. "And don't worry, we'll be very careful."

"Optimus." Naanee looked up at the robot. Even though he was seventeen feet taller than her, she seemed to be the more threatening of the two.

"Yes, ma'am?"

"Take care of my granddaughter. You understand?"

"I won't let anything happen to her." He put his hand on his chest, sincerity in his optics.

Naanee nodded. "Good, now transform and go enjoy the city... but be back before dinner."

"Yes, ma'am." Shikhi and Optimus chorused before the latter turned into a fire truck.

Grinning, the girl jumped into his cab and buckled her seat belt as the transforming truck began to roll down the street.

"Do you really think this is a good idea?" He asked as they drove through the woods.

"Unless a freak meteor shower hits Detroit while we're there, I think we'll be good."

- - - -

"Me and my big mouth." Shikhi mumbled an hour later as another chunk of rock hit a building.

The news that night would later say that an experimental rock removal drone from a construction company had malfunctioned over the city. As a result, rocks the size of houses were raining down on the shopping district of the city.

Optimus didn't think about that. All he could see were innocent people in danger.

"Shikhi." He ordered. "Get out. I have to help."

"What?" She asked as she got out of his cab. "What are you talking about?"

"People will die if I don't do something." He replied.

Without another word, he transformed.

He ran through the city, using billboards and occasionally his body to keep the rocks from hitting the humans. He didn't pay attention to the stares or what people were saying. He only cared that they got to safety.

As he fought the rocks, a mask appeared over the lower part of his face. He was briefly confused (had he been capable of that the whole time?) but decided not to question it. If anything, it made sure that part of his face was protected.

The real shock came when he needed a weapon to destroy a particularly large rock. Acting on instinct once again, an ax appeared in his hand from seemingly nowhere. Once again deciding not to question it, he used the (ridiculously powerful) weapon to obliterate the rock.

After a while, he noticed that there were no more rocks. As he wondered how to put the ax and mask away, they disappeared seemingly at his will.

"Shikhi." He looked around for her before she ran up to his feet.

"Are you alright?" He asked, trying to see if she was hurt at all.

She just grinned. "I'm fine! That was awesome!"

He gave a small smile... and realized that every human nearby was staring at him.

Before he could wonder if that was a bad thing, there was the sound of cheering and a thunderous applause.

- - - -

"I guess the government isn't like how they show it in movies." Shikhi mused as she stood next to Optimus and her family, watching the agents at work.

"Don't believe everything Hollywood tells you." The government agent said as he walked over. He held out a hand to Shikhi. "I'm Agent Fowler."

"Nice to meet you, sir." She politely greeted.

Optimus watched them shake hands, then attempted to do the same to Fowler. The agent ended up just shaking the robot's finger, but the small smile on his face showed he was amused.

A day after the transforming robot had saved Detroit from the falling rocks, a group of government agents had shown up at the Banerjee house. Shikhi, fearing the worst, had made Optimus transform into a firetruck and hide in the barn. However, it turned out that the agents had only been there to talk to Optimus, allowing the eleven-year-old and her father to stay with the robot the whole time. Once they realized he wasn't a threat, just a poor guy with amnesia and no idea where he came from, they'd been more than happy to leave him be... so long as he was willing to help the city of Detroit now and then.

They'd also asked for permission to take Optimus' escape pod to their military base for study. He'd been happy to oblige; not only was it busted, but he didn't remember how to work it. A group of trucks and a military vehicle for moving large objects had arrived that afternoon. The Banerjees watched as the various agents and soldiers worked to get the alien object aboard.

"So," Ryan Banerjee asked, "what happens now?"

"Your family, and its newest member, can keep living their lives." Fowler answered.

"I'll be honest," Shikhi admitted, "I thought you'd want to lock Optimus up and experiment on him."

"Lot of reasons why that wouldn't be a good idea." He told her. "First of all, your friend's face is all over the news, and everyone's calling him a hero. Taking him in would just make Uncle Sam look bad. Second, how on Earth do you experiment on a giant robot? Third, how do we know some of Optimus' people won't come here looking for him someday? If they find out we mistreated him, they might consider that an act of war."

Optimus seemed to freeze at the mention of his people... whoever they were.

As Agent Fowler and her parents talked, Shikhi watched her friend. He was looking at the escape pod with a wistful expression on his face.

- - - -

Lilo and Stitch played on the barn wall, but from her place on his shoulder strut, Shikhi could tell Optimus wasn't interested.

"Hey, are you good?"

"I'm fine."

"Okay, but... You've been really quiet since this afternoon."

"I've... Just had a lot to think about."

"...You're a hero, you know. You're all they're talking about on the news."

"It felt good, too. Helping those people."

"Maybe being a hero's in your programming."

"Maybe... I don't know anything about my programming."

He looked at the movie. They watched as Stitch landed face-first on a Hawaiian road after falling from Gantu's ship.

"What if I'm a weapon?" He asked. "What if I was created to destroy? What if that's why I have that ax and mask? What... What if I was designed to hurt innocent people?"

"Then you can be like Stitch." She replied. "You can overcome your programming, and be who you choose to be."

He thought on her words, watching as Stitch chose to save a frog from laser blasts.

"I choose to help others." He declared. "This is my home, and I'll defend it."

"Good." She answered. "'Cause we don't want you to go."

"Even if my people show up one day? Like Agent Fowler said?"

"If they show up, they can't make you do anything you don't want to do. Mom says that 'the only master of you is you.'"

"I'm the master of me." He muttered.

They continued to watch the film, but she could tell that Optimus felt a lot better.

Chapter End Notes

As much as I love G1 Optimus' Freightliner mode, I LOVED seeing Prime as a firetruck.

The government agent's reason why they wouldn't hurt Optimus unless he proved to be a threat is my personal vendetta against the "evil government agents/scientists" trope. Dissecting a strange creature wouldn't make sense from a scientific or political standpoint: it's a lot easier to learn about a living creature while its still alive, and if you kill/torture an alien from a sentient species, then there's a good chance the rest of that species will consider it an act of war. It's more pragmatic to just be nice to the alien unless it proves itself a threat.

Prime's ax is one of my favorite Transformers weapons (I almost screamed when I saw the ax appear in Transformers One). So, naturally, I gave Optimus a scene where the ax gets to shine. Before anyone asks, the ax was in his subspace. He doesn't have anything else in there, so there won't be any other surprise belongings.

Yes, that's Agent Fowler from Transformers: Prime. He's one of my favorite human characters from the Transformers franchise (behind Spike, Sari, Charlie, and Noah). How could I bring in government agents without showing him? Side note, I know that there are in fact a lot of ways one could experiment on a giant robot, but Fowler's an agent, not a scientist.

Lilo and Stitch is one of my favorite Disney movies (with The Lion King being my absolute favorite). Much like me, Optimus' favorite scene in the film is the surfing scene.

Auto-Boot Camp, Part 1

Chapter Summary

> B-127 is ready to join the Autobot army, and has high hopes for himself. Unfortunately, he ended up in the same platoon as a bunch of jerk-bots... under the command of the disgraced Sentinel Minor.

Chapter Notes

> As you can probably imagine, this chapter is largely adapted from the episode of the same name.
>
> To avoid an overly-long chapter, this one will be broken up in two.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"All Cadets must report to the assembly area in ten cycles." The speakers announced in Ultra Magnus' voice. "That is all."

A small yellow Autobot with a wide grin stared at the recruitment poster for the Elite Guard.

"Yeah, that's what I'm talking about!" He grinned at the recruitment poster. "I am *so* Elite Guard material!"

"Heh. In your dreams, sub-compact."

The yellow mech turned and saw another mech. He was roughly his size, but colored a teal blue and with a more angular face plate.

"You won't even meet the height requirement." The other mech continued to taunt.

"Well, you're no luxury shuttle yourself." The yellow mech said, comparing their heights. "In fact, it looks like we were both forged from the same protoform mold."

If he was going to join up at the same time as this mech, he may as well try and make friends.

The jerky mech didn't see it that way.

"You poor, sad bot. It's not *how* you were forged, but who you *know*."

"So, who should a bot know around here?" He asked as he stepped closer to jerk-bot.

"I'll give you a hint," he replied as he shoved the yellow one away, "it's not you."

With that, he started walking towards the assembly area.

With an ex-vent, the yellow mech followed.

There were three other mechs at the assembly area. One of them seemed to already know the teal mech. He'd turned his chassis silver, and the teal mech was punching him.

"Hey, guys!" The yellow mech cheerfully greeted. "Can I try?"

The teal mech and his friend just laughed at him and walked away.

The yellow mech ex-vented again... and felt a tap on his shoulder.

"Hey, there, little fella!"

He turned and saw the biggest mech he'd ever seen. He was chewing on a cable.

"Can you scan picture of me next to these big tall buildings? They'll *never* believe this back home!"

The yellow mech scoffed. "First time off the Energon farm?"

"How'd you know?" The large green mech reacted with surprise before grinning. "I'm Z-42. Who're you?"

"B-127, alright?" He replied with annoyance.

If he wanted to become a member of the Elite Guard, then he couldn't be seen talking with some farmer's bot.

"Atten-hut!"

The mechs all fell into position as two other mechs approached. One of them was smaller with red plating, while the other was tall and blue with wide shoulder struts.

"I'm Cliffjumper Prime." He told the mechs. "It's my duty to mold you mechs into loyal Autobot soldiers."

He stopped in front of a silver mech with an odd red sphere on his forehelm.

"State your designation and goal."

"I am L-134." He stated. "I joined to be an Elite Guard intelligence officer, sir!"

"And your power?"

His arms elongated.

"Impressive, Longarm." Cliffjumper told him.

The next recruit, I-100, wanted to be an Elite Guard trooper. He could make himself indestructible, and got the designation Ironhide.

The jerk-bot was designated W-11919, and he wanted to be an Elite Guard commander. His power was (unfortunately) a more powerful version of B-127's, and he ended up renamed Wasp.

Z-42 was the only one who hesitated.

"Uh, I was kinda hoping I could be a certified space bridge technician... uh, sir!"

The other recruits laughed, including Cliffjumper Prime's assistant.

"Space bridge technician?" The assistant laughed. "Here's a bot who knows his place!"

"Silence, Sentinel Minor!" Cliffjumper Prime quieted him. He turned to the recruit. "Primus knows we always need more technicians. If that is your goal, then I hope you accomplish it. Your power?"

He turned his servos into wrecking balls, and spun them around a bit. One of them landed on his head (causing everyone but B-127 to laugh).

"Ooh, sorry." He apologized as he rubbed his processor. "I also joined up cause I kinda thought it would help me get a hang of my power."

"And yet you shrugged off a wrecking ball like it was nothing." Cliffjumper Prime nodded. "You're as tough as a bulkhead, so that'll be your designation."

"Thank you, sir!" Bulkhead grinned.

B-127 announced that he wanted to become an Elite Guard member, and demonstrated his stingers... by accidentally taking the top off of a building.

"Nice bumbling, Bumble-bot!" Wasp yelled at him.

"In my experience," Cliffjumper stopped the teasing, "clumsiness and an eagerness to please often resulted in worthy soldiers. When I was a cadet, we called soldiers like that 'bumblebees'. So that'll be your designation: because I can tell you have a lot to offer."

"Bumblebee, huh?" He muttered to himself.

It wasn't the *toughest* name, but it was already growing on him.

"Alright, recruits!" He called out. "I leave you in the servos of Sentinel Minor. He will be your drill sergeant. Obey him as you would obey me. Is that clear?"

"Sir, yes, sir!"

- - - -

The glamour of joining the Autobot army quickly began to wear off. It became obvious to Bumblebee that not only did Bulkhead have a strange interest in being Bee's friend, but none of the other recruits liked the yellow bot.

Unfortunately, that included Sentinel Minor.

Every solar-cycle, Bulkhead and Bumblebee ended up paired together on the worst assignments, with Bulkhead droning on about space bridges and life on the Energon farm. And anytime one of them messed up in any way, shape or form, Sentinel Minor made everyone do transform-ups.

Cliffjumper Prime was a bit more forgiving, but he wasn't overseeing the cadets as often as the Minor was.

It wasn't long before the rest of the recruits utterly hated the pair. Bumblebee took to looking at the stars at night, trying to lose some of the day's tension.

That's how he heard the transmission.

He was walking back to the barracks when he heard com static.

Curious, he sneaked over to see what was going on. The noise was coming from an alley between two buildings. He silently peered inside.

And had to mute himself before he screamed.

"Megatron will speak to you now." A deep voice came over the com.

Megatron?!?

"You have disguised yourself well, my spy-bot. The Autobots would never suspect they have a traitor among their new cadets. Now that you've infiltrated the Autobots, you must climb through their ranks and destroy them from within."

Trying not to panic, Bumblebee intook some air to cool his systems. Bracing himself, he readied his stingers and jumped into the alley.

"Show yourself, traitor!"

He was talking to a bunch of oil barrels.

As he wondered what happened, he heard footsteps. Freezing, he turned and saw Wasp walking out of the next alley.

Not daring to make a sound, Bee waited until the teal mech was gone before he started moving.

It couldn't be true. Wasp was a jerk-bot, no question, but he couldn't be a traitor...

Or could he?

Bumblebee needed to tell someone. Fast.

Chapter End Notes

The series implied that the Autobots don't have names until they're given them upon joining the army. A lot of Transformers fans, myself included, theorized that they had

their numerical designations (i.e. B-127, D-16, etc) before getting names. Hence why Bumblebee goes by B-127. I made up the rest of the numerical designations because I didn't know if any of them had any pre-established.

Longarm (spoiler:Shockwave) has a pretty meaningful designation: 13 is seen as unlucky in most Western cultures, while the Chinese view 4 as equally unlucky. I was going to make it L-666, but that seemed a little on the nose. If you use the A1Z26 cipher, you'll find a little message in Wasp's designation...

Auto-Boot Camp, Part 2

Chapter Summary

Bumblebee manages to unearth a traitor... and make a friend.

Chapter Notes

So originally this chapter was longer, then Archive glitched and I lost the ENTIRE thing. As such, I skip over a few of the scenes in the episode simply because I don't want to go through the headache of trying to remember everything.

Also, note to self, copy each chapter in a document before you try and post it.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Bee's one-bot mission to expose Wasp as a traitor was... slow-going, to say the least.

The first mech he'd gone to was Longarm, since he was the one training to be an intelligence officer. The mech had been very interested, and had been the one to tell Bee how much Cliffjumper rewarded those who revealed traitors. He'd be put on the fast track for the Elite Guard for sure!

Unfortunately, most of his efforts ended up blowing up in Sentinel Minor's face... like when he tried to capture Wasp saying something treasonous and accidentally broadcast Sentinel talking to the camp's medic about the rust infection on his aft.

They got to do two hundred transform-ups for that one.

The punishments Bee got from his fellow platoon mates (except Bulkhead and Longarm) were even worse.

If not for Longarm pulling him out of the closet and reattaching his legs after one especially cruel prank, Bee might have given up.

Wasp accidentally helped motivate Bumblebee more after that prank with the simulation grenade...

"Hey, there, little buddy!"

Bee groaned as the last bot he wanted to see walked up.

"Need a servo?" Bulk asked.

"I'm not little," he growled, his frustration bubbling over. "And I'm not your buddy!"

He transformed and drove away, determined to finish the simulated combat exercise.

A few astroseconds later he felt guilty. After all that Wasp and Ironhide had put him through, he had no right to treat Bulkhead that way. Especially when the big green bot was the only one not to treat him like scrap...

He had to detransform and run when a stray laser blast almost hit him.

Wait, laser blast?!?

The simulated combat guns had been turned into real ones, and they were firing wildly at Bee.

"Hang on, little buddy!"

Fearlessly, Bulkhead's robot mode charged onto the scene. Barely dodging several blasts, he scooped up Bumblebee and got them both out of harm's way.

"Sorry," he apologized as he transformed into robot mode. "I didn't mean to call you 'little buddy'."

Guilt twisted in Bee's innards.

"Hey," he said, "you just saved my Spark. You can call me whatever you want."

"Really?" The joy in Bulkhead's smile was enough to make Bee smile back.

The sweet moment was interrupted by more laser fire.

The big green mech transformed his hand into a wrecking ball and swung it at the guns.

Instead, the wrecking ball hit one of the camp's watch towers. The building came falling on top of the live guns... and on top of Sentinel Minor.

Bulkhead retracted his wrecking ball, and looked guilty.

"Uh, maybe I should apologize to the Sarge for that?" He muttered with embarrassment.

Bee looked at the carnage, both impressed and horrified.

"Bulk, some apologies are better left unsaid."

The two shot out of there before anyone saw them.

- - - -

The fact that someone had activated the guns during the simulation (and the fact that a building had fallen on top of Sentinel Minor) meant that the rest of the planned exercises for that day were canceled. Cliffjumper Prime, suspecting foul play, wanted all cadets away from the training grounds until the next solar cycle.

Bumblebee, fresh from the wash racks, had just been about to sit on his berth when Longarm drove in. He transformed right in front of Bee, his optics urgent.

"I just heard there's going to be a surprise locker inspection. This could be your last chance to expose the spy-bot!"

His dream on the line and his interest piqued, Bumblebee nodded.

At that exact moment, Wasp drove in and transformed.

"I'll distract him." Longarm whispered to the smaller mech. "You get his key."

Using his limb-elongating powers, the bigger mech stretched out his arm. The teal bot tripped over it and fell flat on his face plate. Bumblebee rushed over.

"Let me help you up, Wasp." He said as he pulled the other mech to his feet, snatching his locker key in the process.

Wasp shoved the yellow mech away.

"Keep your servos offa me, gear-grinder."

With that, he stomped towards his berth.

Bee shot a triumphant look at Longarm (who gave a nod of approval) before he went over to Wasp's locker and opened it.

What he saw confirmed his suspicions.

"You!"

Sentinel Minor, fresh from the infirmary, stomped in, his eyes on Bumblebee.

"What are you doing in Cadet Wasp's locker?"

Bee stood at attention and pointed at the locker's contents.

"Exposing a Decepticon spy, sir!"

Sentinel peered in, and he saw what Bee had.

A Decepticon com receiver.

Sentinel Minor's face plate twisted in anger.

"We need to report this to Cliffjumper Prime."

- - - -

Everyone stood at attention as two Elite Guards, Smokescreen Prime and Hound Prime, wheeled Wasp out of the brig in a prisoner containment trolley.

Wasp was protesting like his Spark depended on it.

"But I'm innocent, I tell you! You're making a big mistake, all of you!"

Cliffjumper Prime glared at him with optics that could melt steel.

"You made a mistake when you chose to side with the Decepticons. To be an Autobot warrior is to stand for bravery, integrity, and above all loyalty. You have betrayed your homeworld, and all who live there. Sentinel Minor, remove his Autobots emblem."

"But I didn't betray anyone!"

"Mute it, traitor!" Sentinel Minor growled as he ripped the emblem off of Wasp's chassis.

As he struggled, his optics met Bumblebee's.

"I'll get you, Bumblebee! If it's the last thing I do!"

"That's enough. Primes, please take him away."

The Elite Guards did so.

"Cadet Bumblebee," Cliffjumper Prime continued to speak, "allow me to congratulate you on a job well done. But before we disperse, there is another matter to attend to. It seems that one of today's disasters did not come from a traitor's interference. Whoever toppled the tower and injured Sentinel, please step forward."

Bulkhead looked extremely guilty, and took a step forward.

So did a yellow mech.

"It was me, sir." Bumblebee spoke up. "When the guns started firing real ammo, I panicked and went crazy with my stingers."

"What? No, it was me!" Bulkhead cut in. "I tried to take the guns out with my wrecking ball and hit the building instead."

Cliffjumper Prime looked between them.

"While I can tell it was an accident, the fact remains that one of you destroyed a building and injured an officer. Those are very serious offenses, and I have no choice but to expel from this platoon whoever was responsible. If you don't tell me who really caused the accident, then I'll be forced to remove you both."

Bulk and Bee shared a glance.

But neither said a word.

Cliffjumper sighed.

"Your loyalty to each other is very admirable. But rules are rules. I'm reassigning you both. Pack your belongings and be ready to head out with in a megacycle."

"Yes, sir." Bulkhead sighed.

"Where will we be sent?" Bumblebee asked nervously.

- - - -

"Woo! Yes! I have arrived!" Bulkhead kept cheering as they waited for their shuttle. "A bona fide space bridge technician!"

Bumblebee sighed. So much for the Elite Guard.

He'd lost what he'd fought so hard to get.

He glanced up at Bulkhead kept excitedly chattering about their new assignment.

The big lug's joy was infectious, and Bee found himself smiling a little.

True, maybe he'd lost his chances at becoming an Elite Guard.

But maybe he'd gained something better.

- - - -

"I managed to frame another cadet for treachery." The Decepticon spy reported. "The Autobots are completely fooled."

"Very good, my loyal spy-bot." Megatron congratulated. "Continue your reports as you move through the ranks."

"Yes, Lord Megatron." Shockwave answered as he finished the call.

In the privacy of the wash rack, he transformed his body back into that of Cadet Longarm. Then he left and went to go train.

Chapter End Notes

I made Bee a little nicer to Bulkhead in this AU because I thought it made their friendship a bit more genuine.

Yeah, Wasp still ends up accused of being a traitor. Frankly, he did it to himself: if he wasn't constantly giving Bee grief, then Bee would have been less likely to believe that he was a traitor. Also, he had the misfortune of being under Cliffjumper, who (in all of his major appearances) is fiercely loyal.

Evermore

Chapter Summary

A brief nature walk turns into a deep discussion.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"I can see why you wanted to come here." Optimus admitted as they continued through the woods.

"Yeah. Late fall is when it's the prettiest." Shikhi nodded.

Lately, his young friend hadn't been able to spend as much time with him as she used to. For seven hours a day, five days a week, she and Sanjay had to go someplace called "school". And when they got home, Shikhi had to spend roughly an hour working on something called "homework" (which she described as a form of legal torture). She still spent time with him in the woods or in the barn, but she had to go to bed far earlier than she was allowed to during the summer.

Fortunately, on the weekends she didn't have to go to school, and could spend the whole day with Optimus. The first few weekends of the "school year" had been rainy, so they'd watched movies in the barn (Shikhi had laughed at his reaction when he learned who Luke's father was). But finally, it was nice enough out to take a walk through the forest.

Optimus was in awe. He'd grown used to seeing trees everywhere (well, at least when he wasn't in Detroit), but he'd thought they were green. But in the last month they'd begun turning gold, red, orange, and brown. At sunset, it looked like the forest was on fire.

"Beautiful." He ex-vented.

His audials picked up a tiny sound.

"Did you hear that?" He asked.

Shikhi looked around, pushing up her glasses.

"No... It was probably just the wind."

"Right." He nodded (careful not to shake her off of his shoulder).

He took a few steps more, marveling at the nature around him, when he heard another sound.

This time, his human companion heard it, too. And she saw what had caused the noise.

"Ooh, look!" She whispered and pointed.

He turned.

In a little clearing a few feet away were four quadrupedal animals. Two of them had sticks on their heads, one didn't, and one was tiny with spots on its back.

"Deer." She whispered excitedly.

"Are they dangerous?" He whispered back, uncertain.

"No, they're harmless. Let's get closer. But be quiet."

He gave a tiny nod, then stepped forward as slowly and silently as possible.

When they were roughly ten feet away, all four animals spotted them and froze.

"Be very still." She whispered at Optimus.

He didn't move.

One of the deer, the one with the antlers, took a step forward, its ears moving slightly.

It was... beautiful.

Entranced, he slowly held out a servo and extended a finger.

The deer came forward, sniffing it.

Seeing there was no danger, the other three deer came over to meet their new friend.

A smile crossed Optimus' face.

They were such gentle creatures...

Suddenly, a twig snapped. All four deer turned, their ears up in alarm.

"What's wrong?" Optimus asked, despite knowing the deer couldn't answer.

"They probably sense a predator." Shikhi answered. "There are things in the woods that eat deer."

"What about us?"

"Nothing can eat you, you're metal. And I'm probably safe while I'm up here."

The deer, thoroughly spooked, ran off into the forest.

"Do you think they'll be alright?" Optimus asked.

"Yeah, they live in these woods. They can probably take care of themselves."

A cold wind blew, and she shivered, pulling her gold sweater closer around her.

"Let's get you home." Optimus decided. "I think your grandmother is making... the spicy-smelling paste."

"You mean curry?"

"That's what I said."

She laughed at him.

They'd just come out of the woods when they saw the flashing light of a tow truck.

"Uh-oh." Shikhi commented. "Looks like someone had some trouble."

Curious (and wanting to help if he could), Optimus walked towards the flashing light.

A driver had lost control of his car, it seemed, and scraped the passenger side of his car against a tree. He was fine, it looked, but the car was in terrible shape.

"Everything alright?" Optimus asked.

The driver and the man who came to tow the car both jumped, but relaxed soon enough. Optimus had quickly become a known sight in Detroit, and people were quickly getting used to him.

"All good." The driver promised. "Just got spooked is all. I'm not even hurt."

"What scared...?" Shikhi had begun to ask, when her eyes locked on something.

"Oh no." She breathed, her voice full of despair.

Optimus turned and saw what she had.

And felt sick inside.

Lying on the road, its leg a mess, was one of the deer he'd seen earlier. It was lying very still. Too still.

The two men kept talking as Optimus walked over, optics locked on the poor creature.

"It's... dead." Shikhi stated, a tear in her eye.

"No... But it was just a car." Optimus didn't understand.

A car had accidentally run into his leg just the other day, and he didn't even have a scratch.

"Humans and animals aren't like you." She explained through her tears. "Things like cars can kill us if they hit us. We're not made of metal."

Optimus stared at the deer in disbelief.

- - - -

They'd returned from their walk an hour ago. Optimus had gone into the barn, and leaned against the wall. He didn't start a movie or try to listen to the music system Shikhi had installed.

"Hey."

He turned to see Shikhi entering the barn.

"You want some company?"

"Sure."

She came over and leaned against the back wall as she slid down to the floor.

"Look, I know you feel bad about the deer, but it wasn't your fault. It wasn't anyone's fault. Things die. It's just part of life."

"But to have life taken so soon... How long would it have lived?"

"Well, Dad says deer only live to be about two or three years old in the wild."

"Their lives are that short?" Optimus gaped.

"Sometimes they live longer, but... yeah."

"...How long do humans live?" He was almost afraid to ask.

"It depends. Most people live be about eighty or so, but if you're healthy you can live be a hundred, or even longer."

"...Do all humans die?"

"Well, yes, one day. Our bodies slow down as we get older, and one day they just can't go on anymore."

"Will you die someday?"

"Yeah." She nodded. "But if I'm lucky it won't be for a while."

"...Do you think I can die?"

"... I don't know." She admitted, looking him over. "You're made of metal, but you have feelings and you can think. And that means you have a soul."

"A soul?" He asked.

"Mom and Naanee say that your soul is something deep inside you, made of all good things. And that it doesn't die, and goes on forever."

She stood, and pulled something out of her pocket. She held it up to Optimus.

It was tiny, and hard to grasp, but he was able to look at it.

It was a very old photo showing a woman (who he realized was a much younger Naanee) and a man.

"The man is my grandfather, Naana. He came to America with my grandmother when they were just married. When my mom was a teenager, he died in a car crash. She says that it was one of the hardest times in her life. Naanee told her that the best thing we can do when someone we love leaves is remember them, and know that they loved us."

He handed the picture back to her.

"It's bad to kill," Shikhi finished, looking at the photo once more, "but it's not bad to die."

"...Thank you, Shikhi."

She ended up spending the rest of that Saturday night in the barn with him, showing him her collection of comic books. He came to like the idea of superheroes, though he was particularly fond of the hero Superman. Much like him, Superman had arrived on Earth and chose to help humans.

He'd also made a promise to never kill those he had to fight.

That night, after Shikhi had gone to bed, Optimus made a similar promise.

Chapter End Notes

Believe it or not, elements of this chapter actually come from a canon Transformers comic series. In that series, Optimus accidentally steps on, and kills, a deer while marveling at a forest. He's racked with guilt, and ends up talking to Spike about how fragile life on Earth is. Once I got this scene in my head I just couldn't get it out.

I have a feeling that Optimus' comfort characters are E.T., Stitch, and Superman. The latter two especially because, like him, they came to Earth with no memories of who they were, bonded with humans, and decided to use their powers for good. Plus, I can't partially base this fic on The Iron Giant without throwing in a Superman reference.

Comment or leave kudos if this chapter made you cry.

Time Goes On

Chapter Summary

Time passes, and Optimus stays the same.

The same can't be said for Shikhi.

Chapter Notes

If you're the kind of person to listen to music while you read, I recommend listening to Coldplay's "All My Love" while reading this chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Optimus learned fairly quickly that there was a big difference between him and humans.

He didn't age. But they did.

The changes in Shikhi started small. First it was small things, like not wanting to play with Sanjay as much anymore and spend more time with the other adolescent females at her school. Then she started eating more. Then she stopped wearing her favorite gold sweater because it was too small.

Eventually, though, it became obvious that Shikhi was changing. The changes scared him at first, but Amita had assured him that said changes were normal in girls her age.

It didn't take long for Optimus to realize that the entire Banerjee family changed, too.

If he didn't change, he decided, then the least he could do was be there for his human family when they needed him.

So that's what he did.

He was there for Sanjay when he lost his favorite plush elephant in the woods, and scoured the forest the whole night until he found it.

He was the one to rush Amita to the hospital when she fell in the yard and broke her leg.

He took Ryan to work one day when his car got a flat tire.

When Shikhi needed to help with a fundraiser for her school, Optimus showed up in firetruck mode and offered people rides. The school had its money in no time.

After Naanee passed in her sleep, he held the remains of his human family in his arms as they cried.

When Sanjay was nervous about his first day of first grade, Optimus drove him and let him beep his horn until he felt better.

When Ryan nearly burnt the house down trying to learn to make Naanee's old chicken tikka masala, Optimus was the one to put the fire out.

After Shikhi got her first boyfriend, Optimus put on her favorite song for her to happy-dance to.

When Shikhi had her first breakup, the alien robot played her favorite movies and let her cry until she felt better.

Sanjay learned how to drive with Optimus' help.

Ryan and Amita were taken to their twenty-fifth anniversary dinner by sentient firetruck.

Optimus was the one to take Shikhi to her first day of community college... and was the first one to support her when she decided that she wanted to go to art school instead.

He was with the family when they said goodbye to Sanjay as he went to serve his country in the Army.

He was there when Sanjay, his tour of duty completed, came home with a medal and a boyfriend named Paul.

He drove Shikhi, and all of her paintings, to her first art show. And he was the first to congratulate her when she sold every piece she'd brought.

He mourned with Shikhi and Sanjay when their parents had their accident, and drove them both to the funeral.

He applauded with Shikhi and Paul when Sanjay followed in his father's footsteps and became CEO of the Banerjee Biofuel company.

It was strange for Optimus to see so many changes in such a short time. But he knew that as long as he was there for his human family when they needed him, then everything would be alright.

- - - -

He'd been told that many people were sad at weddings, even if such events were happy occasions.

Optimus had no reason to be sad... yet he was all the same.

Shikhi had met Sandeep Patel at art school. They'd been dating for about two years. Optimus had been uncertain of him at first, but once he realized that Sandeep was a nice guy, he was happy to drive the two around on their dates... although he was confused about why they never talked about what they did when they were alone together in Shikhi's room.

He'd been especially confused when he saw Sandeep kneel in front of Shikhi and offer her a ring... until someone explained to him what a "proposal" was.

That was when he got excited.

The wedding was held on the shore of Lake Erie; Shikhi had insisted on an outdoor wedding so Optimus could attend.

He'd driven the bride everywhere she needed to go, and had been the one to suggest he drive the groom and bride off to their "honeymoon"... although he'd been VERY confused about why everyone insisted on tying cans and shoes to his bumper. They explained it away as an old human custom; Optimus realized he had no hope of understanding, and decided to simply grin and bare it for one day.

The wedding itself had gone off without issue, and he had fun watching the humans party and dance.

There was a moment, though, watching Sandeep and Shikhi dance, that he felt strange.

He felt... a longing. A desire to hold someone the way Sandeep held his new wife.

Was there anyone out there for him?

- - - -

Sandeep and Shikhi decided to live in the house she had grown up in. Optimus still lived in the barn, and all of Shikhi's stuff was still there.

For about a month, things were quiet.

And then Shikhi came back from the doctor's office with an enormous smile.

The alien robot thought he was done being confused by human customs, but he was happy if she was happy.

He first noticed something was wrong with her when she started getting very sick in the mornings.

Then he saw her eating a salad made of lettuce, potato chips, raspberries and chocolate pieces (which he was pretty sure WASN'T something humans regularly ate).

When he noticed that her stomach was beginning to grow, he finally worked up the courage to ask if she was sick.

That was the day he learned how humans reproduced.

Knowing that she was okay (and that he'd soon have a new human to meet), Optimus relaxed.

Sure, he was still a bit confused when she got angry for no reason or made him drive her to a fast food restaurant at three in the morning. But he'd helped his human family through hard or strange times before, and he'd do it again.

After nine months of Shikhi's odd changes, Optimus was woken from recharge at midnight by a panicky Sandeep. In moments he was in firetruck mode, speeding them to the hospital

with his sirens blaring.

Due to his size, the alien robot couldn't enter the hospital. He was forced to sit outside (in firetruck mode so as not to draw a crowd) and wait. It was the longest six hours of his life.

Finally, *finally,* he saw Sandeep and a tired-looking Shikhi leave the building.

There was a blanket-wrapped bundle in her arms.

"Optimus," Shikhi had told him in a soft voice, "do you want to transform? There's someone I want you to meet..."

He did what he was told, and stared at the tiny bundle in wonder.

They were so small. Their skin was the same color as Shikhi's, and they had eyes the color of Sandeep's.

"Meet my daughter," she said with awe and love. "Her name is Priyanka. Priyanka Patel."

"Hello, Priyanka." He whispered to her.

- - - -

Priyanka, or Priya, grew very quickly.

She was a lot like her mother had been as a girl; she was smart, kind, and loved to watch movies or listen to music with Optimus.

But where Shikhi had been loud and adventurous, Priya was quiet and liked to stay close to home... or at her uncle's place of work. She proved herself to be smarter than even her Uncle Sanjay, as she graduated high school at age fourteen.

It wasn't a shock to anyone when, at age fifteen, Priya announced she wanted to be a chemist and take over Banerjee Biofuel when Sanjay retired.

Her childhood was a bit different from what Shikhi's was like. But, as he'd promised, he was there with her every step of the way.

She had seemingly just become the new CEO of Banerjee Biofuel when she met John Suzuki.

Optimus had been there at the time, and he recognized the looks that John and Priya gave each other. He was the first to predict what would happen next.

Two years later, the alien robot once again attended a wedding on the lake shore.

And a year later, he brought the now gray-haired Shikhi to the hospital to meet her granddaughter: Amaya Patel-Suzuki.

- - - -

Humans aged so quickly compared to him.

Whatever his species was, they experienced time at a different rate.

It felt like Shikhi had gone from a child to an old woman overnight.

But he took comfort in that there were some things that stayed the same.

"You've been watching the same movie for literal decades." Shikhi laughed when he suggested they watch *E.T.*

"Some things are timeless." He snarked back. "I should know."

"Oh, there you go again, rubbing your agelessness in my face."

"Sorry we're late." Priya walked into the barn with an apologetic smile and a baby in her arms. "Someone needed a diaper change."

"For goodness sakes, your father isn't that old yet!"

"Mom!" Priya shook her head.

Optimus just smiled and started the film.

As he sat back, Shikhi climbed into his right hand and sat down. Priya did the same in his left hand, baby Amaya in her arms.

He held three generations in his hands, and he was prepared to hold many more.

This was his family; that was his duty.

He just couldn't wait to see who Amaya would become.

Chapter End Notes

Shikhi is and always will be Optimus' first human friend. But she wasn't the one I knew he was going to have as his companion during the events of the series. So I did the next best thing: show Optimus being there for her throughout the important moments in her life.

This chapter was mainly written so I could better show time passing without making this fic ridiculously long.

Yes, Amaya Patel-Suzuki is going to be Optimus' companion in during the events of the main series. Her character, and what her and Optimus' life is like, will be explained more in the next chapter.

Also, heads up, Chapter 11 will be the last chapter for this part of the series. Part Two will start where Chapter 11 ends!

Optimus and Amaya

Chapter Summary

The Detroit Police Department has two very unusual allies.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"All units!" Rodriguez shouted through police scanners. "We have reports of an arson at the Tomy Memorial Library!"

The large, blonde, mustached police captain led his people towards the fire. It was big enough that they could see it from several blocks away.

"Alright, dispatch, we're on approach." Fanzone spoke into his police radio.

"Several of Sumdac's police robots should already be there." Officer Gabriela Rodriguez, the dispatch officer, reported. "They've managed to block in the arsonist and clear the area of civilians. But the road construction has caused several car accidents; no fire engine is currently available."

"Alright, don't worry, we'll arrest the arsonist and get everyone clear." He hit a button as he drove. "Goldstein, what's your position?"

"Uh, Captain? This is still Rodriguez."

"Oh. Uh, hang on--" He fiddled some more, his already-erratic driving growing more crazed before he refocused.

"Alright. Goldstein?"

"Still Rodriguez, Captain."

"This is why I hate machines." He grumbled.

He stopped complaining when they reached the sight of the fire.

Like Rodriguez had said, the police drones had blocked off the area (though the building's librarians still remained on the premises). Unlike what Rodriguez had said, a firetruck was present and spraying foam onto the fire... though there didn't seem to be a driver.

As soon as he got out of his car, a young woman's voice called out to him.

"Nice of you to join the party, CFZ."

"I told you not to call me that, Miss Patel-Suzuki." He grumbled.

"And I told you to call me Amaya." She fired back.

The twenty-three-year-old walked over. She was dressed in a dark blue jacket over a red hooded shirt with black jeans and silver-colored combat boots. She had jet black hair in a messy bob with a light blue streak running through it. She had no makeup, but wore silver studs in her ears and a necklace with a red robot face as its pendant.

His trained eyes let him know that her handheld sedating gun, invented by Sumdac himself, was in it's holster under her jacket.

"Anyway," she continued, "the police drones have the arsonist barricaded in an alley next to the building. Optimus is getting the fire under control."

As she spoke, the glow from the fire severely diminished. The foam had extinguised the fire, and the firetruck turned off its hose.

Before the gathering crowd's eyes, the truck transformed into a twenty-two-foot-tall robot.

"From what I can tell, Captain Fanzone," Optimus reported as he took a few short steps towards the police officers, "the fire was definitely arson. Several jars full of flammable liquids... what I believe are called 'Molotov cocktails'... were used to start the fire on several levels of the building at once. Fortunately, I put out the worst of it before it could spread to the books. The building's sprinklers should be able to put out the rest."

"That's good news." Fanzone admitted. "But what about the perp?"

"PERPETRATOR IS ORDERED TO HALT!" One of Sumdac's police drones called out.

"Get away from me, bolt-buckets!"

A red-headed young man dressed in a black leather jacket and matching pants managed to dodge the police drone's grabby servos. He'd disguised himself by putting a bandanna over his mouth and nose.

"Freeze, dirtbag!"

Several of Fanzone's officers, including the captain himself, pulled out their weapons.

The arsonist responded by grabbing one of the female librarians and pulling out a knife.

"Nobody move or the lady gets it!" He called out.

"Stand down!" Fanzone gave the call. His officers obeyed.

Amaya Patel-Suzuki was nowhere in sight.

"Alright, here's how this'll go!" He yelled. "You're gonna let me walk free, or she's a goner!"

"Please, no!" The librarian begged.

"Zip it, lady!"

"I think you need a nap, buddy!"

Amaya's snarky voice called out as a blast of blue energy shot out from behind a cop car.

The blast hit the arsonist square in the face. His eyes rolled back in his head and he fell back. His grip loosened on both the knife and the librarian (who ran for it as soon as she was free).

In barely a second, the criminal was on the ground, out cold.

"Those blasts only last a minute!" Fanzone reminded his people. "Let's zip-tie him before he causes anymore trouble!"

Officers Goldstein and Zabala were already on it.

"Nice shot, Amaya." Optimus congratulated his partner as she came out from behind the cop car.

"Nice foam-work, Optimus."

She held her hand up. He tapped her palm with his finger.

The officers removed the criminal's mask, showing his face.

"Nino Sexton." Fanzone shook his head with frustration. "Looks like he's graduated from pickpocketing to the big leagues."

"Is there anything in his records that could hint at why he'd do this?" Amaya asked one of the police drones.

"SEARCHING." The drone answered. "NINO SEXTON. TWO PRIOR ARRESTS DUE TO PETTY THEFT. WAS EXPELLED FROM MARTIN LUTHER KING JR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL AT AGE FIFTEEN FOR SETTING SCHOOL LIBRARY BOOKS ON FIRE--"

"Stop." Amaya told the drone. "Looks like someone wanted to relive old times."

"Well, let's hope he doesn't set the prison library on fire." Fanzone commented. "Alright, boys and girls, let's get this perp down to the station."

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"Another successful night, huh?" Amaya asked as she got into the passenger seat.

"I'll admit," he answered, his voice coming from the firetruck's radio, "I was skeptical at first about this 'city protector' thing. But since we started working with Captain Fanzone, we've done Detroit a lot of good. Even he admitted that the city's safer than its been in a while."

"Hey, with great power comes great responsibility."

"Isn't that from that comic book you showed me?"

"It's still true. You have the power to help people, why waste it?"

"True, but you don't have powers... other than your ability to annoy Captain Fanzone in under a minute."

"Everyone has that power. And to answer your question, there's no way I'd let you save the city completely on your own. We've always been a team, and we always will be."

"Alright, that's a good reason." He admitted. "So, until another emergency pops up, what do you want to do?"

"I'd say get something to eat. Want to swing by Mom's work? You can get your daily dose of biofuel, and I can sample that new boba tea place they have in the cafeteria."

"What is it with you and boba tea?"

"It's boba-ly delicious!"

He sighed at her terrible pun while she laughed. Then he good-naturedly started driving in the direction of Banerjee Industries.

Chapter End Notes

Part One is done!

As I said, "Defender of Detroit" was basically the prequel for the next part of this series (which will cover season one of the show).

Amaya Patel-Suzuki's personality was heavily inspired by Detective Elisa Maza from Gargoyles. She's dedicated to protecting others and won't hesitate to do the right thing. However, she believes that rules were meant to be broken, is far more casual than the average cop, and is a born snarker.

Amaya's outfit was fun to think up! If the color scheme wasn't enough of a tip off, she models her wardrobe off of Optimus' key colors (with most of her every day clothes being a shade of blue, red, or silver). She had her necklace commissioned to match the Autobots emblem on Optimus' arm (even if neither of them know what the symbol means yet).

Optimus is well-known to the city of Detroit by then, with many considering him a local hero. Amaya has no official police training, but she's naturally gifted at deduction and holds a license to carry her stun gun. Neither of them are paid for their work helping the city, but Banerjee Biofuel is such a successful company that the whole family is loaded (though they still live below their means). Amaya's trust fund is so big she never has to work a day in her life; she and Optimus work with the police department simply because it does so much good. She commissioned her sedating gun from Sumdac; he's not willing to build weapons, but he can be convinced to make non-lethal self-defense tools.

If you consider Optimus Shikhi's brother, then TECHNICALLY he's Amaya's great uncle. However, because he hasn't aged in all that time (I'd say he's in the Cybertronian equivalent of his mid-to-late twenties), both Priya and Amaya see him as more of an older brother. Some of Amaya's little cousins refer to him as "Uncle Oppie", though.

Amaya can get away with calling Fanzone nicknames partially because he doesn't actually mind it as much as he implies and partially because there's no law stating you can't call a cop an affectionate nickname.

End Notes

I was working on my other Transformers fic when I got the idea for this. It started out as just a little "what if" scenario, and then it just kept growing.

If the first few chapters get enough positive reception, then I'll go through with my plan to make this a series. Part One will focus on Optimus coming to Earth and becoming Detroit's resident superhero while also showing what was happening on/around Cybertron as a result of Optimus disappearing.

Parts of the story are heavily inspired by The Iron Giant and Sonic The Hedgehog 3 (mostly the friendship between Shadow and Maria). If you've watched either movie, you'll note that there are similar moments. But I promise to add enough of my own stuff so that it doesn't feel like I just copy-pasted!

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!